

OBK: Beginning To Heal

A Holistic Approach to Reentry Services for Returning Citizens

By Mike Schuette OBK Program Director

STEP 1: “Beginning to Heal” personally by facing the traumas of your imprisonment.

- Studies indicate that going to prison and living in prison is trauma that may take an individual year to overcome. Prison hurts in a lot of ways, and those who are incarcerated sometimes push others away to protect themselves from that pain. Some people avoid relationships, grieving, and emotional self-care to avoid feeling helpless ... or arm themselves with distance and indifference to keep from feeling vulnerable. Change is hard for everyone.
 - Healing is part of moving forward and connecting pieces of one’s life.

STEP 2: “Beginning to Heal” by facing the traumas of returning to family and community.

- Studies indicate the high financial and emotional cost of keeping in touch can put strains on these relationships. Returning from prison is a challenging transition not only for the one returning, but for their family and loved ones too. Both incarcerated people and their loved ones may feel guilty in relation to each other. In addition, society places many obstacles in the paths of people with criminal records. These include legal barriers and social stigmas.
 - How can anyone expect to succeed?

STEP 3: Home, Family, Employment, Community and Life are all about TEAMWORK.

- Nobody is good at everything. No one is self-sufficient; and nobody knows it all. No matter whom we are, how old we are, what we have, or where we live, we all need each other. These apply to our family, but also to those we work with, go to school with, and neighbors and communities that we live in.
 - Regardless of age, wealth, social status, race, and nationality --- we all need each other.

STEP 4: Applying Life Skills and Behavioral Work Ethics in the community, on the job and in the world.

- Everyone has unique skills and perspectives to contribute to make the world a better place for all. Productive and responsible employment with proper work ethics is a great opportunity to share our God-given abilities for the benefit of our communities as well for the benefit of our families and ourselves. But we all continue to be shocked not only with what goes on the job ... but also what goes on in our communities, in our churches, in schools, in sports, in our government in Washington DC, and in the world.
 - What actions are legal and illegal anymore?

STEP 5: Evaluating different jobs, benefits, risks and income to meet individual and family needs and dreams.

- Just getting any job may not be enough to meet life's financial needs. Surely you don't want to be forced to go back into illegal income sources and sooner or later end up back in prison.
- This class helps you evaluate your whole financial situation to come up with a realistic plan so you have a better idea as to what kind of job and pay you will need to meet personal and family financial obligations and enjoy a comfortable lifestyle.
 - The right job, with adequate pay and benefits can help you realize your worth, help you feel better about life, help you to do the things you want to do in life, and help your family have a better life as well.

STEP 6: Budgeting Skills everyone needs to master since money matters!

- Money problems can be extremely stressful, can break families apart, and can make a life very difficult and depressing. You will be happy for the rest of your life when you get serious about getting the best money managements skills RIGHT NOW!
 - It is very important to know the best money and budgeting skills!

STEP 7: Smart Buying Strategies for your home and home shopping.

- There's no avoiding spending money ... but we can learn how to spend money wisely. We have shopping advice from experts in the industry who will share their tips so you can become a very smart shopper.
 - We have ways to protect our returning citizens from landlords trying to take advantage of them. We also offer tips to shop wisely and conveniently, and smart ideas to save money.

STEP 8: Benefits plus Important Rights and Responsibilities for Returning Citizens.

- We encourage students to take advantage of job benefits, resources, rights and assistance programs available from the State of Illinois and educational facilities.
 - We encourage our returning citizens to seek potential benefits from potential employers and to register to VOTE.

STEP 9: Beginning realization of mistakes in life, giving forgiveness, restoring faith and repairing harm.

- Restorative Justice is a system of criminal justice which focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with victims in the community at large.
 - Restorative Justice can lead to a transformation of people, relationships and communities.